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IN DEFENSE OF THE OPPRESSED

HOPE VILTIS HOPE

FOR UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

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VILTIS ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

May will mark three years since the first appearance of VILTIS, which started in mimeographed form. We would like to publish an issue that would surpass the Christmas issue, in beauty, size and contents. We are lining up pictures from all over the world taken by our readers (fellows in the Armed Forces) and VILTIS members, choice articles and select stories. We are turning once again to you readers for assistance in the form of "Congratulations to VILTIS," 25 cents per name. Larger space will also be available from one dollar and up. Let each and everyone send in their quarters or more by April 15th.

THE CHICAGOLAND FOLK FESTIVAL

The Chicago Folk Festival will hold its Fourth Annual program on May 3 at Orchestra Hall.

The Chicago Folk Festival is a non-profit association which is educational in character aiming to preserve and present folk music, both of American and Foreign origin whether it is expressed in dance or in song. Conscious of the wealth of folk music of our land and of that which we have inherited from the people of the world, the Chicago Folk Festival encourages a year-around participation in this wholesome pastime and presents a yearly program in order to preserve this rich heritage and further an appreciation of what each group has to offer and has contributed to America. The ultimate aim of the Chicago Folk Festival is to help to overcome intolerance and discrimination because of race or nationality through this interchange of folk music and art.

Over 300 selected performers in colorful native costumes will present some typical dances and songs of their respective countries of origin. At least ten types of national folklore will be represented in this program. Mr. Joseph Creanza, Founder and Director of the Chicago Folk Festival, is directing the Fourth Annual Program.

THE NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL

The 12th annual National Folk Festival will be held in Cleveland, Ohio, May 22 to 25 under the joint sponsorship of the Cleveland Sesquicentennial Commission and Western Reserve University.

Approximately 400 participants will be coming to Cleveland from 25 different states, in addition to groups from the community itself.

Mountaineers will be present from many regions, lumberjacks, cowboys, miners, Indians, peoples of British and Irish stock, Italians, French, Poles, Hungarians; Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Pennsylvania Dutch, Filipinos, and

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Negroes, with their important contribution to American folk expression, to name only a few.

There will be a striking display of traditional dances and music, the latter often on instruments exceedingly quaint in design, played by skilled performers, specially selected for the festival.

This first post-war Festival is slated as one of the most important events in two year-long celebrations, the 150th anniversary of the founding of Cleveland in 1796 by General Moses Cleveland and his rugged band of Connecticut pioneers, and the 125th birthday of Western Reserve University.

American unity through the vast complex of peoples, races and original nationalities that compose the United States, is the keynote of the event which has been held 11 times in different cities since the establishment of The National Folk Festival Association in 1914.

From its beginning, when chiefly the older folk cultures in the country were emphasized, the Festival, which of course has always included samples of native Indiana recreational life, has become all-embracing in scope.

Exponents of fun, music, dance and off-hour activities of the social life of the later migrants to this country now mingle with presentations of the cultures inherited from the early settlers.

What emerges from the melting pot of originally diverse nationality groups is characteristic American gaiety, sentiment, folk feeling, and traditions whose loss would culturally impoverish the country.

According to Sarah Gertrude Knott, National Director of the N.F.F.A., "Interchange of folk traditions, singing, dancing, and instrumental music among people of varied racial and national backgrounds helps to break down the barriers and bring about more understanding. On a national basis it helps to acquaint people in the widely separated communities of our country. The country is so large, and our traditions so varied, that without such a coming-together few people in one section know what people in the other sections are doing."

WHAT ABOUT WORLD GOVERNMENT?

Below is reprinted excerpts from a letter written by Chaplain Wm. Rodney Shaw, one of the original VILTISites. The belief that World Government is the only solution to end wars is growing in leaps and bounds. I myself am one of the many who share this view; that only through a world government can we curb Imperialistic enslavement by nations which are of either the Black Nazi-Fascist brand or of the Red Commie-Fascist type.

VFB.

Finny, I'm really worried about the world situation. Russia is no doubt preparing herself for a war which she believes we are going to start and we are steadily grinding out atomic bombs for a war we believe Russia will begin.

We are facing a situation that can be solved only by the formation of a world republic in which nations bear same relation to each other and to the world government that our states in the U.S. bear toward one another and to the federal government. Everywhere I talk this idea I find that people are receptive to it and endorse it enthusiastically. But we must somehow bring pressure to bear on Congress so that they will set under way plans for this world republic.

You are, of course, familiar with Bevin's statement of Nov. 23 '45 that England was ready to consider such a union with any nation that so desired. Truman, in his message to Congress, said that out of UNO must come an organization that was representative of the peoples of the world and in which the countries could come together as states dedicated to the common good of all.

It seems to me that, through the Congress, we could instruct our UNO delegates to extend such an invitation as Bevin did, and to explore completely the possibilities of setting up such a world republic within the framework of the UNO. Even if only one other country accepted our invitation at first, I believe it would gather momentum and growth faster than a snowball on a 45 degree slope.

Of course, the greatest of care would have to be exercised that Russia did not interpret the move as being one to form a coalition of nations against her. I don't believe Russia would join such a group in this decade. There is no doubt a possibility that she would interpret such a move as being very dangerous to her and would redouble her preparations for war. Yet, if she found herself facing a group of nations that had federated themselves into a world republic, she would certainly hesitate a very long time before initiating hostilities. For such a world republic would have the fighting power of the Allies in this war (minus Russia, of course). And it would be a fighting power made infinitely more dangerous and mighty because of the unity of purpose and control brought about by the federation.

I have written a number of Congressmen about this but have not received any answer as yet. Finny, we've got to bring pressure to bear on them some way to make them take this step. The possibilities of atomic war and the present turbulent waters of International politics, frankly, have me scared. Time is of the essence.

Chaplain Wm. Rodney Shaw
Presidio of San Francisco, Cal.

FROM VERBA TO JURGINE EASTERTIDE IN LITHUANIA

V. F. BELIAJUS

Beginning with Palm Sunday until the day that honors St. George, Lithuanians throughout their native land are busily engaged performing the detailed and arduous, but interesting tasks that their holiday activities involve.

Palm Sunday is called Verba in Lithuania. I can remember how on the Saturday before Verba my cousins Agota and Antanas, my brother Arejas and I went wading through the muddy roads that led to the forest. Glee-fully we went about, carefully selecting the extra fine full grown branches of verba. In Lithuania the name Palm Sunday is a misnomer. Most natives there have

never seen a palm; consequently, utilized in its stead is this Verba or "dwarfed spruce", a "juniper type" bush. It is with verba branches that people go to the church to re-enact the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem. Here too, lies the chief differences between the observance of Palm Sunday ritual in Lithuania and its observance in all the rest of the Catholic world. However, in Lithuania we transform the juniper branch into a thing of artistic beauty, before it is ready to serve our special purposes.

The verba grows all the year around. One is at liberty to cut these branches at any time, but on this particular Saturday we took special delight in the choosing and the cutting; for after all, only one day remained before these verbas, all decorated and groomed, would be exhibited and exposed to the scrutiny of our church brethren.

Upon reaching home with enough branches for attending church members of our family (and who would not go to church on Verba?) the women folk hurled themselves into the task of assisting us youngsters. Sheets of colored paper, bought in town, on a previous Sunday visit to church had to be fashioned into lovely paper flowers of many colors. By sundown, in the light of a taper, we were all sitting about the table busily working. Clicking our scissors, paper streamers were made and the pleasant task of making roses, lilies and other flowers was in full swing. The flowers once made were neatly tied and artistically arranged on the verba branch. It seemed as if we were busier at this task than any we had ever done before, but what did we care? We knew our effort would be more than remunerated in the three-fold purpose the verba served.

The town church appeared colorful on Palm Sunday and the refreshing pine odor that prevailed throughout the services not only served as an air purifier but as incense as well. The place, literally looked like a flower conservatory. It was amusing to us to note that when the Verba services were performed many of the worshippers (especially the so-called verba artists) did not hear; neither did they wish to hear. They glanced about, here, there and yon, scrutinizing the verba that "so and so" made to see what flowers she imitated and what hues had been used. Then, when the services are over the verba was blessed and brought back home where each masterpiece decorated one of the sacred pictures that always hang on the walls of all good Lithuanian homes.

Another busy day is the Saturday before Easter—Saturday following Palm Sunday. On this day our entire household was bent to the task of making Easter eggs—or Margutis, as we called them. This was a very painstaking detail but eager as we were, we hardly minded sacrificing a few hours sleep before dawn to do it. This was absolutely necessary because Holy Saturday is a shortened day as the later part of the afternoon and the night are spent in church.

The house that morning was so busy you would have thought it a market place. Here one was doing the Easter cleaning, there another prepared food for the day marking the end of Lent with its inevitable fish diet. For us Lithuanians that meant herring. To cap the turmoil, the rest of us were busy around the table processing the margutis.

This we called the batik process. The boiled eggs were bedecked with designs of molten wax applied rapidly, so as not to give the wax a chance to cool. We had to be diligent workers because the process required skill and speed. Then eggs were dipped into boiling dyes, taken out and the wax wiped off. Where there was wax the